

WITH THE FARMERS

By Prof. W. F. MASSEY

Thursday, November 27, 1913.

Fertilizing Value of Tobacco-Stems.

"Please tell me what tobacco-stems are worth as a fertilizer. I have seen it stated that they are worth more than stable manure. A ton of tobacco-stems will have more manure elements in it than a ton of stable manure by a very considerable amount."

The average of analysis shows that they contain 2.70 per cent of nitrogen, 8 per cent of potash and about 1 per cent of phosphoric acid. This will give them a high manurial value for some lands, particularly sandy soils that need potash. Of course you cannot compare these percentages with the readily available plant foods or commercial fertilizers, but it would be well to give the plant food in the stems the same money value as that of fertilizer, since they must go through decay and nitration to become available so far as the nitrogen is concerned, though some of it is really already in the form of the nitrate of potash. Stems are very valuable where they can be had cheap enough. But it would hardly pay to buy them for manure at more than \$5.00 a ton.

Amount of Silage on Acre.

"From any acre of land we can grow on an acre of land we will make thirty bushels of corn an acre." That will depend somewhat on the kind of corn grown for some varieties make ear-heads stalks than others that make just as much corn. About twenty-five years ago a prominent dairyman in Northern Ohio wrote to me, when I was living in Albemarle, asking where he could get the best Virginia White Dent corn, then commonly called B. & W. corn, because a firm making silage machinery had introduced it. I told him that he could get it right there from a farmer I named, and they have ever since been buying the seed corn every year from the same man and say that they have to have the Virginia seed to get the best crop. Now with this corn and planting on the fertile techniques given below, I made twenty tons an acre. This was on land that would make only fifteen bushels of corn, and the corn is a heavy stalkmaker. I came to the conclusion that twenty tons is about as heavy a crop as can be made. On upland, with corn that will make thirty bushels an acre, I think that you will be fortunate to make ten tons an acre. Now I know that farmers guess a great deal about crops. But my weight was made by actually driving every load over the scales from a measured acre. A writer in one of the farm papers, who owns a winter resort in North Carolina, and has a farm in New Hampshire, said that he made thirty-five tons an acre on his New Hampshire farm. Knowing well, I wrote to him that he was certainly mistaken, for I knew that corn does not grow nearly as heavy in New Hampshire as it does in Virginia, and that I had made corn in Virginia, and never got more than twenty tons. The fact was that he "estimated" it. And that is the trouble with many farmers. They estimate the acre, and then estimate the crop. But the biggest tale of all came from Michigan, where a man declared that he made seventy tons of corn stalks an acre. That would be impossible even with Burkhart's corn, which he says grows sixteen feet tall and makes two ears to every foot of stalk, and I do not believe it any more than I believe Burkhart. It takes fairly good corn to make ten tons of ensilage an acre, and very heavy corn to make twenty tons, and I very much doubt that much over twenty tons has ever been made.

Keeping Artichokes.

"I have a lot of artichoke artichokes and I want to have about three bushels of them for seed. I have to take them up from where they grew, and do not know how to keep them." There is no difficulty at all in keeping the artichokes, for they are perfectly hardy. Simply dig them in sandy soil with the soil white to plant them again.

The Himalaya Vine.

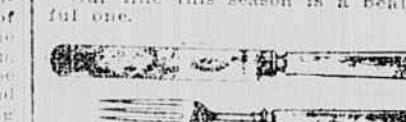
"I notice in a country store a wonderful account of the Himalaya vine, which is said to be a kind of blackberry that grows thirty feet and bears an immense lot of blackberries. Do you know anything about it?" Yes, it has been tried here and found to be tender and worthless as a fruit-producer. There are said to be two varieties, one better than the other, but those who have grown them here have discarded them.

Growing Sweet Potato Plants.

"Can you give directions for growing the Northern variety sweet potato in the Northern market? We needed our potatoes last spring under cloches, but they made plants very well and were too late for the early crop. We have single glazed ashes and cloches which we can use to get the plants. What protection should we give these? Our whole crop this year was poor, small in quantity, poor in quality, running string and long potatoes going deep in the ground. We planted these potatoes on a piece of land which our demonstrator thought good for growing the United States bullet, plowed shallow and worked them well. Had rather a wet season late. Can you suggest any plan to cover them with the soil white to plant them again."

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The Nebraska station sums up their results in the following way:

"The use of farm manure in proper amounts, and properly applied as to be strongly recommended for alfalfa. Where any difficulty is experienced in securing a good stand, inoculation is recommended. Inoculation from soil from well-established alfalfa fields may uniformly better results than were secured by the use of liquid cultures."

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